

For Immediate Release

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**Morelia Film Festival Showcases the Best of Mexican and International Cinema
Participants and Organizers Speak Exclusively with *MexicoToday***

MEXICO CITY, November 2, 2011 — The following is being released today by Marca País – Imagen de México:

The ninth edition of the Morelia International Film Festival drew to an end on October 25 after nine days of red carpets and fanfare. Notable guests such as Quentin Tarantino, Salma Hayek, and Gael García Bernal made the trip to Morelia, a colonial city full of rich history and beautiful architecture in the state of Michoacán. Visitors also flocked to nearby Pátzcuaro, which was named one of the 100 Historic World Treasure Cities by the United Nations. *MexicoToday* was there to take in the events, and spoke exclusively with the festival's contestants, organizers and fans.

Among the filmmakers at Morelia this year was Jes Benstock, director of "The British Guide to Showing Off." Having traveled all the way from London to participate, Benstock spoke enthusiastically of his first trip to the festival. When asked what he enjoyed most, he described both the quality of the films and the hospitality of the people.

Benstock elaborated on what he enjoyed about Mexican cinema, and its combination of aesthetic beauty and rich story and character development. He was just one of many that visited from outside of Mexico, and left singing the praises of the festival and the city. "It's a fantastic festival," he concluded, "really amazing. It covers a huge quantity of Mexican films and great international films as well."

And the spread of films was certainly diverse at this year's event. Films ranged from esteemed Hungarian director Béla Tarr's depiction of Friedrich Nietzsche in "The Turin Horse," to supernatural suspense flick "Los Ojos Azules" (The Blue Eyes) about an American couple that travels to Chiapas, Mexico. Created by Eva Aridjis, Los Ojos Azules is a great example of cinema created by a new generation of young Mexican filmmakers, and showing an entirely different side of the country and its culture.

But it was first time writer-director Paula Markovitch's "El Premio" (The Prize) that took home the top honors, giving it back-to-back victories at Mexico's top two cinema showcases. El Premio tells the story of a Mexican family's struggle to survive repression in Argentina during military dictatorship during the late 70s and early 80s.

The Mexican Documentary Film Selection winner was "Silvestre Pantaleón," which follows the universal theme of growing old as it tells the story of an elderly man struggling to provide for his family and pay for a curing ceremony. Other winners included "Mari Pepa" for Best Short Fiction and "Réquiem para la eternidad" (Requiem for Eternity) for Best Short Documentary. The Audience Prize went to Kenya Marquez, for his dark comedy Fecha de Caducidad (Expiration Date).

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Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas Batel is vice president of the festival, and spoke exclusively with *MexicoToday* about what excited him most about the event. He described the thrill involved with the screenings, the number of people involved, and the chance to promote Mexican films abroad. "During the festival you can see the best of Mexican film and international feature films," he exclaimed.

"We are very happy with the results, with the success of this year's edition. I think that for Mexican cinematography this has been a great festival," said Cárdenas Batel during the closing ceremonies. His pride in the ceremony mirrors that of the other directors and participants, and he was one of many that urged cinema enthusiasts and filmmakers to visit the festival in 2012, when it will celebrate its 10th year!

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